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ABSTRACT

This periodical issue focuses on the theme of diaries, and includes excerpts from the diaries of Iowa children who lived at different times in history. The following features are included: Dear Diary; Eliza's Journey Across the Plains; The Vacation Diary; Children's Diaries; How to Keep a Diary; Soldiering Diary; Slang Game; Diary Detective Game; Writing Right; and Eyeball Benders. (DB)

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THE Goldfinch

Iowa History for Young People

Volume 14, Number 1 Fall 1992

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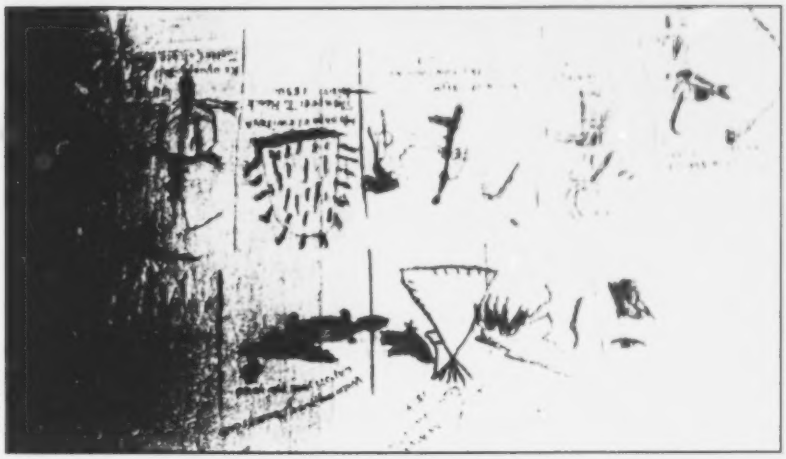
History Mystery



Steven Ohrn

What makes this a diary? Read more about diaries in this issue of The Goldfinch.

This **winter count book** from a Sioux Indian tribe is like a diary. It is not an individual account of one person's life; instead, it is a pictorial history of the tribe. The Sioux did not have a written language, so they did not keep written diaries. Instead, tribal leaders chose a special event that happened during the year to name the year. Then they made a picture symbol of that name and recorded it. The Indians used this naming system as a guide to help them remember years. Not all tribes had the same name for the same year because different things happened to different tribes. Sometimes there were similarities. One year there was a meteor shower recorded by several tribes—the Year the Stars Fell. Winter count books show us that history isn't always found in words. Think of some important events that have happened this year. What would you name this year and what kind of picture would you draw to show the events? Read more about diaries in this issue of *The Goldfinch*.

—Jen Guttenfelder

THE Goldfinch
Volume 14, Number 1
Fall 1992

EDPRESS

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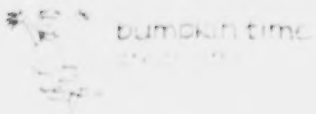
ON THE COVER
What goes into a diary? Anything you want! Illustration by Jerry Brown.



SPECIAL FEATURE
Diary Dictionary
Your key to understanding the weird & wacky words and phrases we found in diaries from long ago, see page 5

Eliza's Journey Across the Plains
A wagon train travel diary, see page 6

Old Places
A new department about architecture, see page 26

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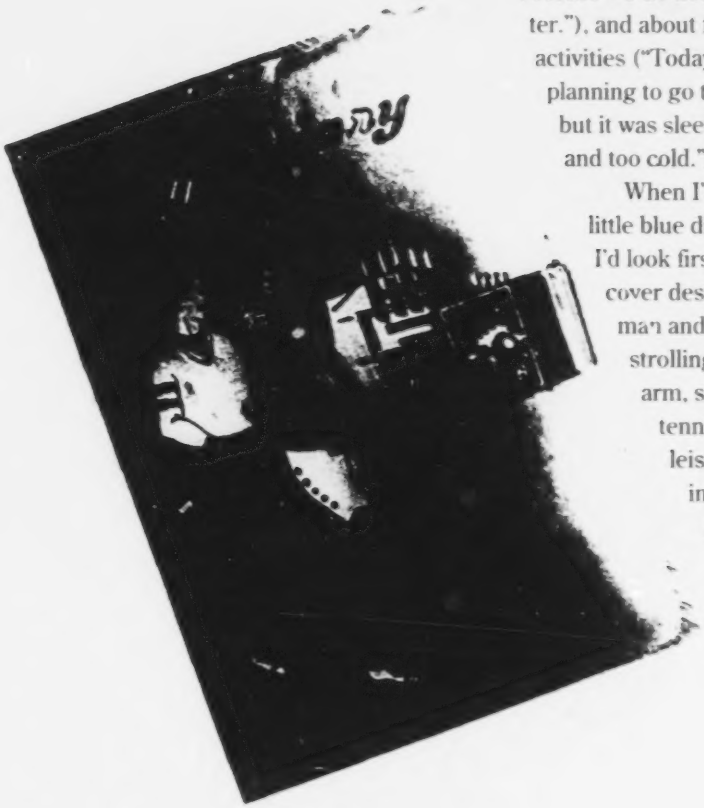
Dear Diary,

by Suzanne L. Bunkers

This is how I would begin a typical entry, back when I first started keeping a diary at the age of ten. Although it was only a one-year diary, I wrote in it for three or four years. I wrote about school ("We practiced play. I wore my pink skirt & my long sleeved blouse"), about the weather ("Today the ground hog saw his shadow. We are all sorry because we do not like winter."), and about family activities ("Today we were planning to go to Sioux City but it was sleeting outside, and too cold.")

When I'd take out my little blue diary to write, I'd look first at the cover design—a young man and woman strolling arm in arm, she carrying a tennis ball and he leisurely swinging a racquet as they passed a football stadium. I lived in Granville, Iowa, a tiny town of 400 that didn't have a tennis court, let alone a stadium.

Now I see how that cover design set the tone for many entries in my diary. I wrote about my fights with my best friend Patsy and about my crush on Gary, a boy I met at the Orange City roller rink. I always kept my diary locked, and I found places to hide the key. I would write about that on the Memorandum pages at the back of my diary ("I hid my key in my pincushion").



I wrote about my fights with my best friend Patsy and about my crush on Gary, a boy I met at the Orange City roller rink.

As a young girl growing up in rural Iowa, I understood the importance of privacy. I knew that my diary was one place where I could write honestly about what I thought and felt, because I was writing for myself. Keeping that

A funky 1950s diary belonging to the author

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Peter Rieker

The author and her daughter

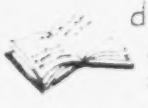
first diary opened up a new world for me—the world of writing. My old dog-eared diary is a treasure. It's precious not only because it paints a picture of the young girl I was but also because it points the way to the woman I have become.

I still keep a diary. It's a large lined notebook, bound in dark blue fabric, with undated pages so I can write as often or as seldom as I want. My bookshelves at home hold 48 of these diaries, each detailing about six months of my life over the past 20 years. Whenever I want to remember how I was feeling or what I was doing at a certain time in my life, I take a diary down off the shelves and reread what I wrote back then.

Writing our own stories

Now my daughter, Rachel, who just finished kindergarten, has started keeping her first diary. Its cover says, "One Year Diary," and it has dated pages plus a lock and key. In it Rachel draws pictures of our cats and practices her handwriting. On one page, she wrote: "Mi name is Rachel. I love cats. I X O cats." My daughter tells me that she's going to keep writing in her diary because she wants to write the story of her life, just as I'm doing.

Rachel's right. Diaries can help us write our own personal histories. They help show what we are doing, thinking, and feeling. They remind us that our lives are worth thinking about. They show that, whether or not our names appear in history books, each of us does have a story and each story matters. ■



In These Pages

Of the more than 100 diaries we read for this issue, we decided kids' diaries would be the most fun for our readers! Read about a young man's first bike trip across Iowa—then go back in time to learn about journeys west, 19th century daily life, and soldiering. Have fun playing diary detective and figuring out tricky slang from the past!

Diary Dictionary

Wild Rosie and Goldie define words and phrases in the diaries used in this issue. In some cases our diary writers just "mist" the correct way to spell, or spelled words differently. The way people spell is often a clue to the way they talk. Look for the Diary Dictionary in red!

Eliza's Journey Across the Plains

Edited by Susanna Ashton

Home, home on the range, where the deer and the antelope play, where seldom is heard a discouraging word, and I write in my journal each day."

Pioneers who traveled from Iowa to California had to put up with many hardships, sizzling deserts, undrinkable water, food shortages, and even boredom. Many travelers wrote about the good things they experienced during journeys as well: helpful Indians, beautiful sights, and adventures on the plains.

Between 1841 and 1866 about 350,000 people crossed the Overland Trail from places like Iowa and Missouri in order to travel west. Some saw the trip as an adventure, some as an escape from the crowded East, and some wanted to make their fortune. Almost all of them saw it as a chance to start a new life. Because many people saw their journeys as important turning points in their lives, they began keeping journals detailing their lives on the trail. Some kept diaries for family and friends at home who would eventually follow.

The Joseph Henry Byington family camped in their covered wagons near Calls Fort, Utah, about 1870.

Denver Public Library, Western History Department

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Eliza Ann McAuley traveled by ox teams from Iowa to California in 1852. She was only 17 years old. She went with her older brother and sister, and two neighbor boys. They met up with her father near the end of the trip. This young group had many adventures in the 5 1/2 months it took them to cross the country.

Bade adieu: said goodbye

April 7, 1852

Bade adieu to home and started amid snow and rain for the land of gold. Our outfit consists of two light strong wagons drawn by oxen and cows. . . . We have two saddle horses and twenty dairy cows, a good sized tent and a sheet iron camp stove which can be set up inside, making it warm and comfortable, no matter what the weather outside.

We have a plentiful supply of provisions, including dried fruits and vegetables, also a quantity of light bread cut in slices and dried for use when it is not convenient to bake. Our clothing is light and [long lasting]. My sister and I wear short dresses and **bloomers** and our foot gear includes a pair of light calf-skin top-boots for wading through mud and sand.

bloomers: long loose pants gathered at the ankle and worn underneath a skirt.

April 19

This morning Tom made me practice target shooting with his pistol. I was very expert at missing the mark, but managed to hit the tree three times out of five.

A dreadful accident happened here today. A boat was taking cattle across. The cattle rushed to one end of the boat, causing it to tip. . .

May 11

A dreadful accident happened here today. A boat was taking cattle across. The cattle rushed to one end of the boat, causing it to tip and in a moment there was a **mass** of struggling men and animals in the water. One man was drowned. Another, who was a good swimmer, remembered that he had left his whip, and cooly turned around and swam back after it.

train: wagon train

May 16

The boys launched their boat this morning and have been ferrying all day, bringing the rest of our **train** across this evening. While we were getting supper, the Pawnee chief and twelve of his [men] came and expressed a desire to camp with us. Their appetites are very good and it takes quite an amount of provisions to entertain them hospitably, but some willow **boughs** strewn around the camp fire (serve) them for a bed.

boughs: tree branches

May 17

At break of day the Indians awoke us, singing their morning song. The old chief started the song and the others chimed in and it was very . . . pleasing.

May 28

Soon after starting we came to a **ford** of strong **alkali** water, which our cattle, being very thirsty, drank of and it came near killing some of them. It also makes their feet sore and we had to make leather shoes for them.

ford: stream

alkali: pronounced (AL-kah-lie), water with salt and other chemicals in it. You can't drink it.

Many artists romanticized the trip pioneers made west. As Eliza's diary shows, she faced many hardships.

June 6

While out with the cattle, the boys caught a little antelope and brought it to camp.

June 9

Camped this evening by a prairie dog village. They are very active little fellows, and look very **saucy** sitting up in their doorways.

saucy: a little rude

June 10

Our antelope, Jenny is a great pet in camp and equally fond of Margaret and me. She bleats and cries if either one [of us] is away from her.

June 25

. . . camped at Independence Rock. It is an **immense** rock. . . entirely isolated and independent of any other rock or hills. It is almost covered with the names of **emigrants**, chiseled in the rock or painted on its surface, with the date of their arrival. We saw the names of some of our friends, who had passed here in 1849 and 1850.

immense: very big

emigrants: people who leave for a new country

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nauseous: disgusting

scalded: burned

July 21

We have met with a sad loss today. Our pet antelope, Jennie, was playing around the camp and the dogs belonging to a large camp of Indians gave chase. The Indians tried to rescue her, but could not. They then offered to pay for her in skin and robes. We told them it was an accident and they were not to blame, but they immediately packed up to go, saying they were afraid the men would shoot them when they came.

At dinner a very intelligent Indian named Poro, came to our camp. He seems to understand the customs of the whites very well. In the afternoon he came again, bringing his little boy, four or five years old.

July 25

Old Poro came along about ten o'clock and stayed a long time, teaching us his language. It pleases him very much to see us try to learn it.

September 4

We drove the rest of the night, passing the boiling springs. . . these springs boil up with great noise and a very **nauseous** smell. . . We hear that a woman and child have got **scalded** very badly by stepping into one of them.

Made our breakfast on bread and milk having no wood to cook with, and one of the cows stole all the water we had. After resting awhile, Margaret and I started on, taking a cow that had given out and been kept behind. We took a bucket a short distance before her, and the poor thing, thinking there was water in it would get up and struggle on a few steps and then fall exhausted. After resting a few minutes we would get her up again a few steps. In this way we had gained about a mile, when we met Thomas returning with a canteen of water. We took a drink and gave the rest to the poor cow, which revived her so that she was able to get to the river.

Our pet antelope, Jennie, was playing around the camp and the dogs belonging to a large camp of Indians gave chase. The Indians tried to rescue her, but could not.

September 14

We climbed one of the highest peaks near the road, and were well repaid for our trouble by the splendid view. . . . we saw the American flag floating from the summit of one of the tallest peaks. We showed our patriotism by singing "The Star Spangled Banner" and afterward enjoyed a merry game of snowball. ■

Talk About It

1. What were some of the things Eliza described?

2. Do you think she enjoyed her travels? Why or why not?

3. Imagine you were on a wagon train with Eliza. What would you find scary? What would you enjoy?

The Vacation Diary

Vacation photographs make great souvenirs. But there is another way to tell friends what you did.

Keeping a diary of your travels is not as fast and easy as taking a picture, but it is a special way of remembering your trip. Photos show people and places you've seen, and your diary can tell how they made you feel and what you thought about them.

In 1982, 14-year-old Ken Smith kept a diary of his vacation with his mom and some friends. Their vacation was a bike trip across Iowa, called RAGBRAI. RAGBRAI stands for Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa. Every year since 1972, during the last week of July, thousands of people ride their bicycles from Iowa's western border to its eastern border. The Des Moines Register *organizes the ride and chooses the roads and the towns that riders will pass through.*

RAGBRAI was 523 miles long the year Ken Smith rode. It began in Akron and went through Cherokee, Forest City, Charles City, Independence, Tipton, and ended in Davenport. This was Ken's first RAGBRAI, and this diary helped him earn a biking merit badge for Boy Scouts.

Ken Smith, 14, biked across Iowa on RAGBRAI and kept this journal in 1982.

July 24, 1982

Getting loaded and ready to leave for Akron, Iowa. It will be approximately a 4 and 1/2 hour drive. It is now 12:30 and we are loading the bikes. This is a tough job and it is necessary to tie them down so they won't fly off the car. Finally we get off on our way. Vicky Place, Chris Hamner, Kate Place, Ron Arpy, Chris Arpy, Chris Place, and my mother and me. We arrive at 5:30 and find a place to park and set up tents . . . and head for town on our bikes. After we ate, Chris Place and I left the others and went around town. Then we all decided to turn in or go take showers. After we were through it was about 2:00 am. We decided to sleep outside because it was so warm.

July 25

We got up around 6:30 ate scrambled eggs and bacon and had a glass of orange juice. Chris P and I did some things to our bike and headed for Cherokee. Our first stop was LeMars, Iowa. In fact that was the only stop on the way. Chris P. and I made it to LeMars first . . . We were all exhausted. Luckily camp was mostly set up, the camp crew, Vicky P. and my mom, had done a great job. After we rested we went over to a stand were we were able to sit down and drink pop and listen to western music. . . . After we ate we all headed back to camp. There we helped get things ready for night. All us kids were going to sleep outside in the open. We got all settled in and the mosquitoes started biting. We had a hard time getting asleep.

July 26

Chris P. and I checked everyone's tires and found that Kate's were a

little flat. So we pumped them up. We left camp about 7:10 am. Just as we left camp there was a big hill we had to climb. But everyone made it with ease. Chris P. and I rode in eighth or ninth gear all the way because you get farther and faster in those gears without having to pedal so fast. On the way we saw kids detassling corn. It looked like fun, but, not as fun as riding in RAGBRAI. . . . We arrived in Estherville about 6:30 PM and covered our bikes with a tarp. Then we went to a lot of stands and ate supper. Finally we came back to camp and played Frisbee and went to bed.

July 27

We made it to Woden where Vicky met us with baking soda to put on our hands to cool down our hands. Chris and I made it to Forest City first. We camped beside two baseball diamonds. Chris P. and I had a water fight. Then we played Frisbee and then washed up and went to a stand and ate. . . .Then I went and got a RAGBRAI hat and a new water bottle. Then we all hit the sack. We were all tired.

July 28

We woke up around 6:30 am,we filled our water bottles and left camp. . . . Then we stopped at Portland. We soaked our feet in the quarry and watch people jump off the cliff into the water. Finally we reached Charles City. Played Frisbee until dark, but had a hard time getting to sleep.

July 29

Our first stop was in Nashua to see "The Little Brown Church in the Vail." Finally we made it to Shell Rock. . . . it felt good to have had foam pads on our seats. The rest of the ride was easy.

July 30

We woke up around 6:00, ate a good breakfast and took off towards Tipton . . . where we would stay at my uncle's. Chris P. and I wanted to get there to ride my motorcycle. We had fun riding and then played ping pong.

The Des Moines Register

Every summer in Iowa thousands of people ride their bikes across the state

July 31

We woke up around 9:00 AM, ate breakfast and were on our way around 11:00 AM. Finally we reached Davenport, Chris P. and I made it all the way 523 miles. When we got there we ran through the fire hydrant that was on. Then we sat in the sun and listened to music.■

Ask Yourself

1. How is Ken's vacation diary like Eliza's? How is it different?

2. What does Ken's diary tell you about his vacation that a photograph couldn't?

Edited by Jen Guttenfelder

Children's Diaries

There are many ways to tell the story of daily life.

What were the days like before television, automobiles, and electricity? How did kids live? How did they have fun? We've read more than 100 diaries and many of them were about life in rural Iowa in the 19th century. Read excerpts from our favorites and play the diary detective game!

What did 19th century children do after school? Spend time with their families.

Meet Rosa Armentrout

She grew up in Wilton, Iowa, in the 1870s. Rosa began keeping a diary when she was 14 years old. Read the following sections from her 1876-1877 diaries.

February 11, 1876

There was no school today, and I sewed some on my quilt that I am making for Mother. . . We have got such a splendid book to read now. we read it loud at nights. I was through the barn today. I still like to play better than any thing else.

March 8

I went to the oyster supper last night. I had a **bumpkin** time. there was lots there. I had my supper. . . then I had all the peaches and cake I could eat and candy. I was to school today and coming home the mud was so deep that I stuck, my overshoes both came off in the mud, so I just picked them up and carried them home. I tell you my feet was nice and muddy when I got home.

bumpkin time: great time

March 14

I did not go to school today. I dident like to stay out but Mother went up to Johns today and I had to stay at home and help wash. I dont like to wash. I know I am pretty lazy but I cant help it. I like to go to school and read and go to parties and get letters and answer them.

February 9, 1877

This is Friday night at 10 o'clock and I am on the tired list. We went to clean the schoolhouse this morning. And such another job as we had was never seen. The mud was an inch thick on the floor and everything was washed, rubbed, wiped, brushed, and cleaned, until our arms ached. And when we got through, the house looked some different from when we begun. But our clothes—oh, dear! I laugh to think of them slopped from head to

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mushpot: 19th-century game
(does anyone know how to play?)

foot. But when we got through, tired and dirty as we were, we all went down on the green and played ball and **mushpot** and had just a **jolly** old time.

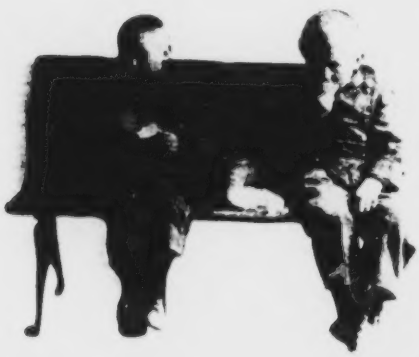
jolly: good

February 12

Well I just came home from the party down to Mr. Herrs. It was splendid never was a better. We had Oysters peaches, crackers & cake. There was so many there. the house was crowded. We did not stay very late this time. We all had lots of fun down there.

March 3

This is my birthday and I am 16 years old. This nice diary was my birthday present. Mother gave it to me this morning, I was so glad for I had just written my other one through.



May 30

Pa, Ma, and I went to town [Wilton] this morning & never got home till nearly 7. . . . I got a real nice pair of gloves today for 20 cts & a splendid parasol for 35. Mother got her such a pretty new hat today.

June 20

Jakie got 55 pounds of ice today & we had some grand ice-cream this evening. . . . My Diary is almost full, just one more days writing then it will be full. I wish I had another like it. We have all had all the ice cream we could possibly eat for once. . . I expect we will all be sick tonight, we all eat, eat, eat.

Meet Sarah Gillespie

Sarah Gillespie of Manchester, Iowa, began her diary when she was five years old. That diary wasn't very easy to read, but she kept on writing. In 1877, when she was 11, she began a journal filled with quotations, illustrations and stories about her life. We even found a tracing of her left foot in one of her journals!

January 12, 1877

The children on this page eat lunch out of lard cans in an early 19th century school.

We went over to north schoolhouse to visit the school where Nettie Barnard teaches. They have from 23-25 **scholars** who whisper a little more than what is necessary, and make considerable noise for such large scholars as they are.

January 22

We are not going to school anymore it is so lonesome up there with only 4 or 5 scholars. Ma washed. We are going to study at home the rest of the winter. Ma says as soon as we get through this arithmetic (book), she will get us another one.

Scholar or schollar: student

Children's Diaries

February 11
We read most everything today.

March 16
Go up to Mr. and Mrs. Morse's in the evening on a Surprise. It is their fifteenth anniversary. We gave them a set of glass dishes. They were very much pleased with their presents. It was a surprise and they did not have their work done at all. We had them married over again. We had a splendid good time.

March 31
We are ciphering a square root.

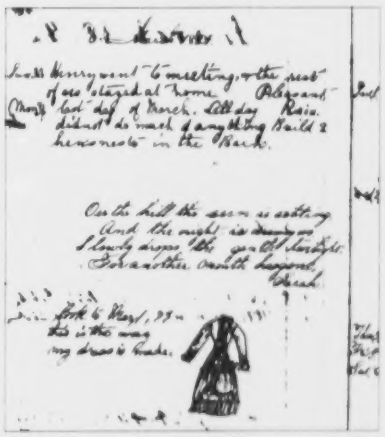
April 3
I done 24 examples to day. Henry done 19. Sunday evening Barr's livery stable, the agriculture depot and the blacksmith shop was burned. They saved all of the horses but none of the carriages. All that was left was a buggy-wheel and cook stove and they were all burnt.

April 12
Ma said her 35th anniversary was yesterday. Pa says it was a lucky thing that she kept it to herself.—begin to wear sunbonnets

ciphering: doing math

April 17
Went back to school. We had 12 scholars. The boys act real mean.

April 26
Ma go to town, she heard that Nellie and Mary Tyler had not got



ISHS

Drawings from Sarah's diary

up and that they thought that Mary would die. I hope not for she is my favorite friend.

May 9
Go to school. Kill 2 snakes. A beggar here.

May 25
Commence going barefoot.

May 27
Did not do much of anything. read and pick posies.

mess of: a bunch of

June 7
Had a mess of strawberries

June 17
Some ("thieves" is crossed out) tramps went past today.

August 21
Had 3 large Watermellons for breakfast and 2 for supper. Those that I ate yesterday made me sick and gave me the stomach ache so I don't think it a very good policy to eat too many at once. Ma picked the largest one in the patch this evening. It is real good very delicious. But I dare not eat very much it makes me have the stomach ache too hard all day.

September 27
We all go to the fair. We had a good time. Got 2 **premiums**, 1 on cake and 1 on bread. Ma has the first premium on a great many things but a few in town are trying to make a fuss about it and say they are not worthy of a premium.

Meet Oliver Perry

Oliver lived in West Chester, Iowa, and wrote in his journal nearly every day for his entire life. Most of his entries are about farm work, but he includes a section at the end of his journal for "Recipies and Cures". He was 15 when this journal began in 1872.

January 24
There is considerable sickness this winter caused by bad colds.

April 1
Father gave me a peach tree today

May 8
We have to replant about 1/2 of our corn. It has come up first rate in dry ground but not where it is wet.

May 19
Our wheat looks tolerable well

August 23—27
William Scranton's boy got lost today about noon aged about 3 years old and there was about 300 men and boys hunting him. I helped one day

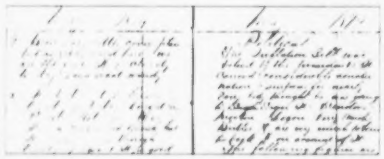
August 28
Found him today in a **slough**. . .

slough:
pronounced (SLEW),
a swampy area

September 18
Father got me a pair of cover-alls today

October 27
There are a good many Prairie chickens around here this year. Quails are **tolerable plenty** here.

November 6
The election passed off very quickly here, General Grant was re-elected to the Presidency. Father did not vote at all.



Oliver's handwriting

December 12
A neat handwriting will be re-spected

December 20
I have caught 56 prairie chickens all together this fall. I have caught as high as 7 in one trap and 15 more in the other in one day!

tolerable plenty: a lot

May 21, 1873
There was quite a rain this morning and about 3 o'clock there was an awful tornado passed south of our house. It **blowed** 5 dwellings to atoms and one house was moved 6 feet from its foundation yet still standing.

blowed to atoms
to nothing

May 23
The largest hail I ever saw fell today some bigger than a prairie chicken's egg.

June 1
Men are busily repairing injury done by the storm. Considerable money and clothing have been collected. ■

Ask Yourself

1. Even though Oliver didn't write as much every day as Sarah and Rosa, do you think his diary tells us less about his daily life? Why or why not?

2. How does the outside world (politics, weather) and the local community affect these diary writers?

3. How do these diaries help us understand what each diarist was thinking? What each was feeling?

Edited by Susanna Ashton and Jen Guttenfelder

How to Keep a Diary

To begin with, it doesn't have to be a diary. It can be a journal, logbook, tape recordings, or a file on a computer. Whatever you want. Because, after all, a diary is for you and not anybody else.

And that's the best thing about a diary. You can use a crayon. You can write in green ink. You Kan spel n e way u want 2. You don't even have to finish your senten. . . . There's no wrong way to keep a diary.

Some people write about really personal things (which is why a lot of people hide their diaries!) and some people write about big public events. You could talk about how angry you are at a friend or how upset you are about the rain forests being destroyed.

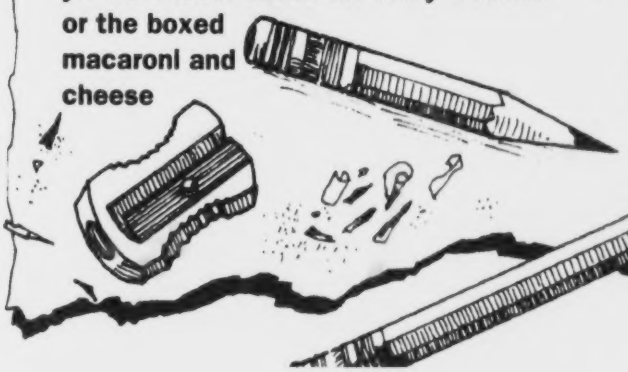
There's a lot to talk about. Sure, you can write about the rainy weather or the boxed macaroni and cheese dinner you had. But you can also talk about how the color of the cheese reminded you of the neon highlighter you use in class or how the rain messed up your skateboarding plans.

Why be normal?

Blank books can be more fun than the kind of journals that have a date on every page—but choose whatever you like. Diaries with locks are neat even if you know that anybody with a bad attitude and a paper clip could break in. Computers are easy. Create a file and give it a secret password. Or for a really portable diary, write on the back of envelopes, napkins, or report cards!

Try doodling or writing stories. Complain that the kid who sits next to you in math class looks like a goldfish, AND show it.

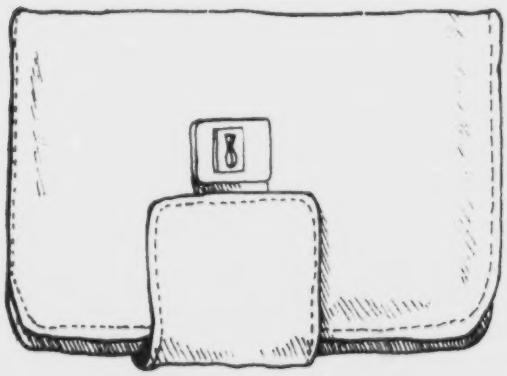
You can add things into your journal—a movie ticket, an overdue library notice, a candy wrapper, whatever . . .

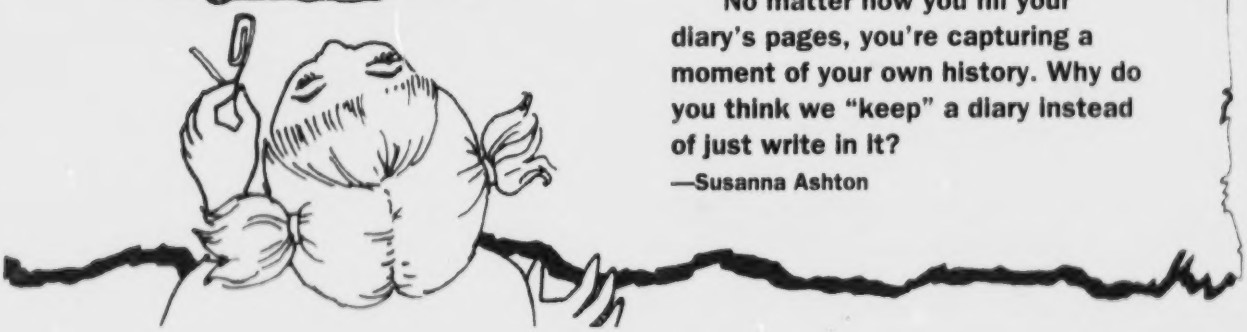


Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

A diARY

It might be something important to you or something just to jog your memory. All kinds of stuff falls out of old diaries. We've found newspaper articles, recipes, photographs, and even dried flowers. You also might want to do something really weird—squirt perfume on a page, write backwards, or cut out words from the newspaper ransom-note style.





Scary blank pages

Often the best way to begin is to write fast about anything at all. Don't even stop to think. Once you get going, it gets easier. If you someday read over what you wrote, you might be surprised. Don't worry about being boring either. If *you* want to write about it, it IS interesting.

No matter how you fill your diary's pages, you're capturing a moment of your own history. Why do you think we "keep" a diary instead of just write in it?

—Susanna Ashton

National Archives/Brady Collection

Unknown Civil War soldiers share a canteen. Many people involved in the war kept diaries.

Soldiering!

A Civil War Diary

Cyrus F. Boyd, 24 years old, was one of 78,000 Iowans who served during the Civil War (1861-1865). He enlisted in October 1861. Boyd kept daily notes on events he saw and then later wrote them up when he returned home. In his diary, he talks about friends, officers, and the conditions of war.

October 15, 1861 **Indianola, IA**
To-day I took my little squad of boys who are left of the Lincoln campaign to Indianola. We had made up our minds to enlist for the War. Times are dull at home and many have gone at the call of the President.

Oct 21 **Knoxville, IA**
The people of Knoxville cheered us and waved flags rags and handkerchiefs to us as we went out of town.

Oct 23 **Keokuk, IA**
During the night someone brought us some blankets and with some old quilts and a Blanket apiece. we got through until morning. With husky voices and sore throats we looked around at dawn for something indicating a *change*. The only change we met was a breakfast of Bakers bread, a little flat bacon, and some coffee made in some old rusty kettles.

Oct 24 **Keokuk**
We to-day (received) a complete set of **Army blue**. The clothes we think are very nice and we are as proud as peacocks of our appearance. How we pity those poor miserable fellows at home. No new clothes because they will not go soldiering. Here we are having lots of fun and glory.

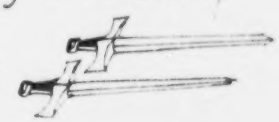
Army blue: uniforms

To-day we were sworn in the service of the United States for three years or during the war. Almost every one thinks we will scarcely have a chance to see the enemy as the war will soon end.

Cannon balls were flying in all directions cutting off great limbs of trees and many men were killed and injured in this way. . . .

March 19 **Mississippi River**
The rain was falling in **torrents** as we marched down Main street. The sick boys at the Hospital looked out from their bunks . . . at the long line of blue with its **glistening** knapsacks and with its steady march. . . .

torrents: falling hard
glistening: wet and shiny



April 6 **Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburgh Landing**
Thus we kept on for at least three miles meeting hundreds—yes thousands of men on the retreat. Some of them were wounded and covered with blood from head to foot. . . . Here we were, men who had never until this morning heard an enemy's gun fire, thrown into this battle without warning. The hot sun and dust and battle smoke had so exhausted us that there was no strength left in the men. . . . Men were riding in all directions with drawn **sabers** and revolvers threatening to shoot and "Cut mens heads off" if they did not stop and **rally**. . . But in most cases their orders and appeals were not heard by these men . . . . Riderless horses came thundering through the woods with empty saddles and horses . . . Cannon balls were flying in all directions cutting off great limbs of trees and many men were killed and injured in this way (because) the heavy **limbs** fell on them . . . a great and *terrible defeat*

rally: regroup gather
limbs: branches

Soldiering!

April 7 **Battle of Shiloh**

No pen can tell, no hand can paint no words can utter the horrors of last night. . . . Unable to help the poor wounded men that fell in yesterday's battle, the living cared only for themselves. . . Two or three of us took a little **ramble** out on the field. We took a look at the **ghastly** sights By this time we had become accustomed to seeing *dead* men and the *shock* had passed We soon came to where the dead lay thick The first dead rebel I came to lie on his back with his hands raised above his head and had died in great agony I took a ***button*** from his coat. . . .

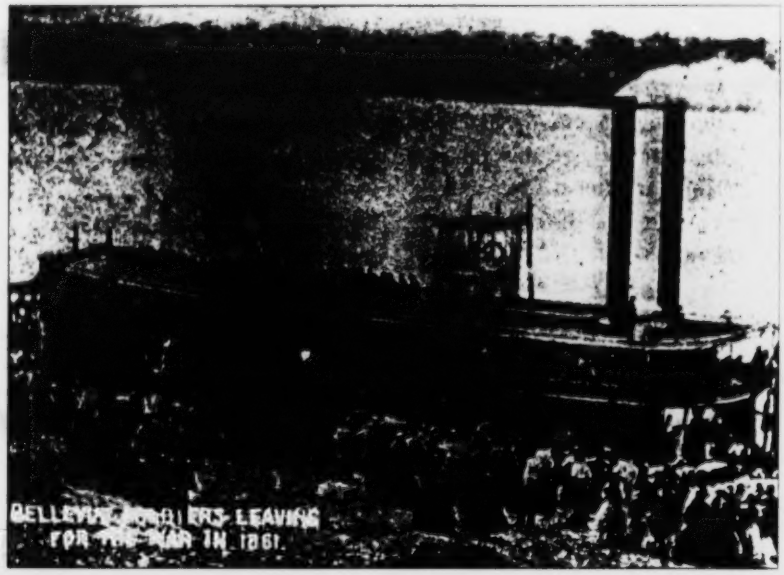
The ground in many places was white as snow with creeping worms.

I saw one **Union** man leaning against a tree with a violin tightly grasped in his left hand.

ramble: walk

ghastly: horrible

Union: The northern side during the Civil War



ISHS

Soldiers and others leave for the war from Bellevue, Iowa.

He had been dead some time and had no doubt been instantly killed. . . . I counted 26 dead horses and the men were lying almost in heaps. **Blue and gray** sleep together. . . . The enemy has retreated and left all his dead and wounded on the field We have whipped him but an awful sacrifice. . . . Ambulances and men are hurrying over the field and gathering up the wounded. The surgeons are cutting off the arms and legs. . . the air is already filled with the **stench** of [rotting] bodies.

April 8 **Shiloh**

(We) have nothing but hard bread to eat which has no more taste or substance than a shingle . . . the mud is about knee deep.

Blue and Grey: both Northern and Southern soldiers

stench: bad smell

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ransacking: looting, stealing

May 19 **Corinth, Mississippi**
The mumps are **raging** in the Army and every other disease known to human beings. I have the **jaundice** and am as yellow as a Yankee pumpkin.

We could not sleep and had to stand up about all night around a little fire . . .

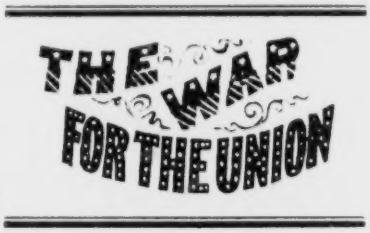
May 24 **Corinth**
If we remain here until July but few will be alive. . . .

July 15 **Corinth**
The men are beginning to feel too well and some of them stay up about all night to play tricks on one another. The favorite sport is to find some fellow lying asleep and pitch a bucket of water on him.

September 22 **Iuka, Mississippi**
. . . the green-flies are so thick here that the earth can scarcely be seen in many spots.

Sept 29 **Iuka**
[After a battle where 40 Iowa men died] The ground in many places was *white* as snow with *creeping* worms. The darkness of the forest and the terrible [death] made it one of the most *horrible* places I was ever in.

Oct 11 **Corinth**
Had no blankets with us and we suffered much last night in the cold rain. We could not sleep and had to stand up about all night around a little fire which we tried to keep alive



SHSI

raging: spreading quickly
jaundice: a disease which can make your skin look yellow

Dec 2 **Abbeville, Mississippi**
Some went to killing hogs and chickens and **ransacking** the village for food. The musical notes of the porkers could be heard in all directions.

March 14th, 1863 **Farewell**
As I cast one farewell look at the shore I can see hundreds of Camp fires burning brightly through all the surrounding country. . . Goodnight. ■

Ask Yourself

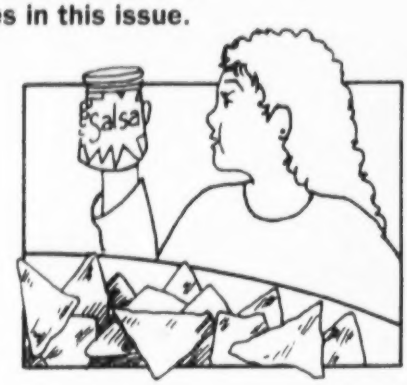
1. What did Cyrus think about enlisting in war before he went?

2. What sort of things did he write about war in his diary?

3. Why do you think people keep diaries during events like war?

Slang Game

Can you figure out slang from the past? You'll find the clues to solving this game in the diaries in this issue.



1. What is a scholar?
   - a) an old man with glasses
   - b) a baby carriage
   - c) a student

2. If you are ransacking, you are:
   - a) robbing
   - b) running with a backpack on
   - c) good looking

3. She had a saucy attitude means:
   - a) She was in a good mood.
   - b) She was a little rude.
   - c) She wanted more salsa sauce on her nachos.

4. If you're exhausted, you:
   - a) have a problem with your car
   - b) are extremely tired
   - c) used to be a host for a late night TV show

5. The pioneers crossed the ford. Did they
   - a) drive through a river?
   - b) climb over a car?
   - c) write an "X" on a picture of a former president?

Answers on page 30.

Illustration by Mary Moye-Rowley

Diary Detective

"Ah Ha!" says the detective. 'The diary of the dead girl said 'Meet J at 8:00 in the park.' Therefore the murderer must have been Jeremy!"

Sound familiar? Detectives on TV say things like that all the time. But this kind of thinking works only when you know who J is. When a diary doesn't explain who J is, what "mushpot" is, or spells a word incorrectly . . . the diary detective is in trouble. Historians are like diary detectives. When something is not explained, historians look for clues. They find clues in other diary entries, history books, newspapers, and by using their common sense. Sometimes a historian simply has to guess. Here are some diary mysteries. Can you come up with some possible solutions?

1

MYSTERY: "We all went down on the green and played ball." What does Rosa mean?

CLUES: It sounds like a place.
Grass is green.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION:_____

_____

2

MYSTERY: Why did Sarah cross out "thieves" in her June 17th entry?

CLUES: She replaced "thieves" with "tramps."
Tramps are homeless people.
Thieves are people who steal.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION:_____

_____

3

MYSTERY: Oliver compares hailstones to a prairie chicken eggs. How big are prairie chicken eggs?

CLUES: It is "the largest hail" he ever saw. Farm chickens are a little larger than prairie chickens.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION:_____

_____

4

MYSTERY: Sarah wrote "Ma is a little sponky about it." in her September 27th entry. What is "SPONKY?"

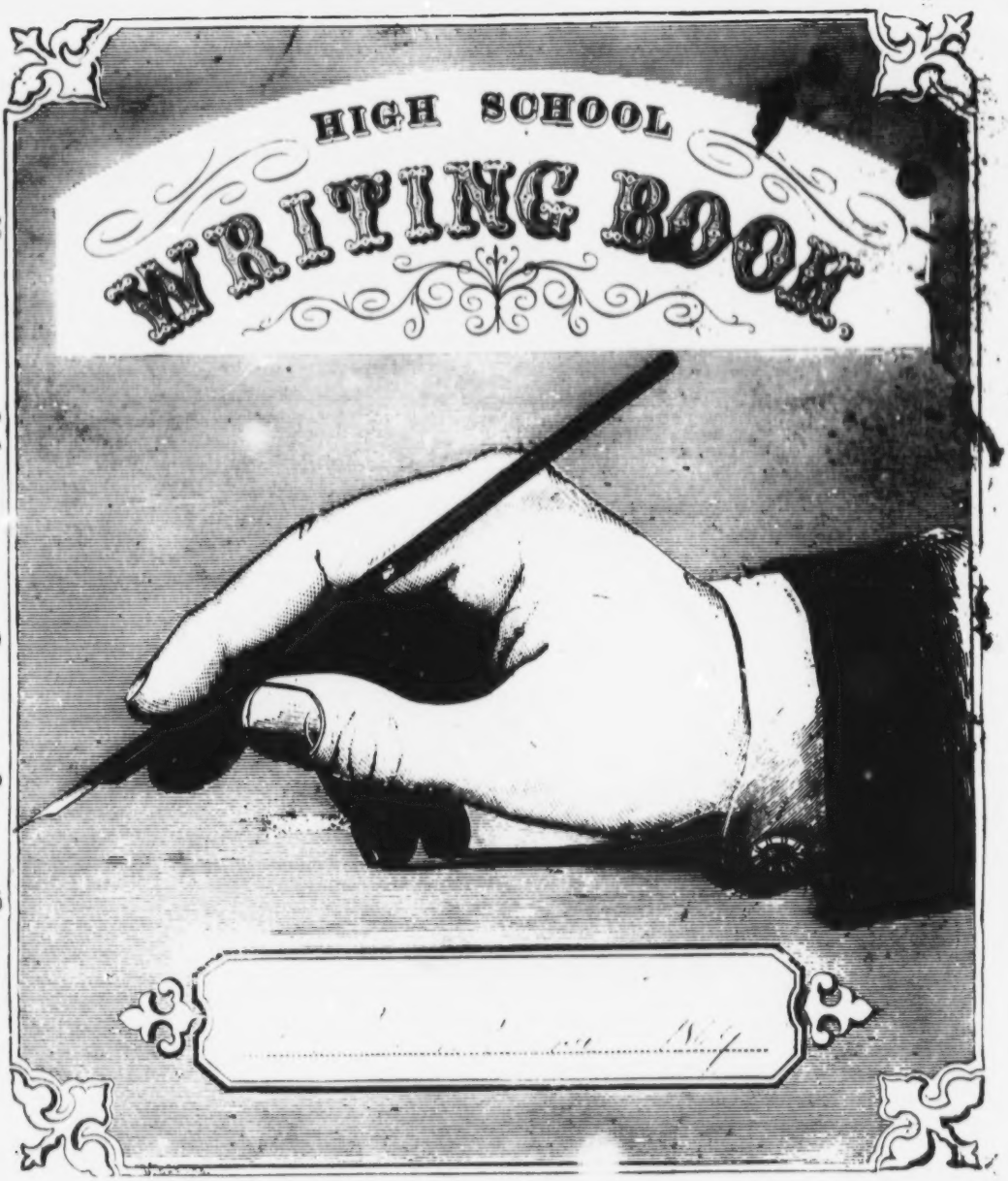
CLUES: Her mother won prizes, but some people are complaining that she didn't deserve them.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION:_____

_____

Answers on page 30.

Illustration by Mary Moye-Rowley



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Writing Right

Your hand cramps. Your wrist hurts. Your teacher is driving you crazy by repeating "use your arm!" You are in a way bad mood.

Where are you? Gym class? Not at all. It's 1915 and you are learning the Palmer method of penmanship (cursive writing). You're not six years old, either. Back then, handwriting was not taught only to little kids learning script for the first time. Adults and high school students also studied penmanship in schools across the nation.

Before computers and typewriters were widely available, handwriting was considered extremely important. You needed a "clear hand" for keeping good business records and a "beautiful hand" was considered a kind of personal expression. It was much harder to write neatly when you had to use a fountain pen and refill it with ink. Unless you held your pen just right, you could get ink spots all over your work.

And often with diaries of younger kids, you can see big ink spots.

The Palmer Method was developed in Iowa by Austin Norman Palmer in the early 1880s. He ran several business schools and became famous for his teaching and textbooks.

The Palmer Method emphasized using arm muscles instead of hand and finger muscles. Palmer taught that your hand would never tire if you moved your arm in his special way. Students had to practice writing hundreds of circles and perfectly titled letters before they could ever pass their penmanship classes.

Because diaries were not usually written for other people to see, the handwriting in them is often hard to read. Sometimes journal writers would experiment with different kinds of fancy script. And often with diaries of younger kids, you can see big ink spots. ■

—Susanna Ashton

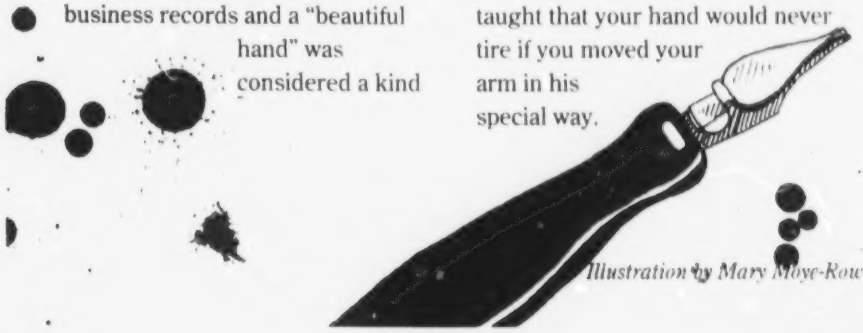


Illustration by Mary Moye-Rowley

A new feature in *The Goldfinch* explores Iowa's old places

As you ride around the neighborhood on your bike or wheel down the sidewalk on your blades, do you ever notice the buildings you pass? Funky old storefronts, brick churches or synagogues, houses that look as if Grandma could live there—are only a few of the many old places fixed up to look the way they did when they were first built. Many Iowans take part in this type of historic preservation.

Diaries provide clues about how buildings looked. Here's a description of Iowa farms from an English man who arrived in Iowa in 1876. William B. Close was looking for land here and the following year began farming near Denison.

Here are quotes from his journal. See if you can find clues about what farms looked like in 1876:

When I talk of farms I don't mean anything like an English farm with several rooms; as a rule the farm houses here consist of but one or two rooms, and are nothing but wooden cabins. It is difficult often to distinguish their barns from their haystacks, except by the former having a hole to serve as door, for they make their barns of hay and it keeps their horses etc. very warm in winter.

The farm we stopped at was larger than the ordinary run. The family consisted of the farmer, his wife, her mother and some five strapping sons. . . .

The people about are [afraid] of lightning, and rightly so, as there being no trees to attract the lightning, it would fall on their houses. So, every cottage and barn possesses its lightning conductor. Almost all the buildings are wood, save in one or two of the larger villages. . . . The Court Houses, schoolhouses, banks or one or two of the larger stores are of brick. A stone house I have not seen in western Iowa.

List the clues about the way buildings were built:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

(Answers on page 30.)

Carrie McKinley Carson spent the summers with her family at Iowa's famous Lake Okoboji resort area. Here's a small glimpse of their cottage taken from her diary of 1899. Imagine you wanted to preserve the cottage. Draw a picture of her cottage using her diary description.

"We found our cottage to be a very plain structure, painted a light gray, and resembling, very much, our wood-house, with the addition of a porch on its front. It is situated on the rising ground about one hundred steps from the lake, the space between being filled with a growth of oaks,— some find large trees, others of the scrub variety. From the limb of one of the large trees hangs a fine large swing; there are hooks on the porch for our hammock, and under the porch I found a hammock-chair. . . .The cottage divides into two rooms,— the sleeping and sitting-room, 14 x 16 feet, and the kitchen and dining-room, 10 x 16 feet. . . . A bright rag rug carpet, considerably worn, covers the floor of the sitting-room, sash curtains, not very full, are at all the windows, and in the sitting-room there are shades; also, two beds and a cot, one rocker, four straight chairs and camp chair. . . ." ■

Carrie's Cottage

Carrie Carson

Eyeball Benders

The more you see, the less you see. Can you guess what these 19th-century writing tools are?

1

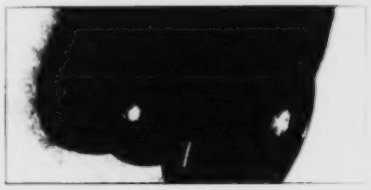
CLUE: This writing instrument came from a bird. It was sharpened and dipped into ink. Often feathers were attached to these and used for special occasions.

2

CLUE: This was made from glass and held ink.

3

CLUE: This fancy silver object rolled across writing to blot excess ink so it wouldn't smear.



4

CLUE: It worked like a salt shaker. This wooden item was filled with sand and sprinkled over ink handwriting to soak up the extra ink

5

CLUE: This 1892 Walker's Writing Wonder was filled with ink. You didn't have to continually dip it in ink.

Photographs by Steve Ohm

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History Makers

Be a history maker! The Goldfinch *wants to hear about your discoveries in Iowa's history. If you have any stories, poems, essays, or drawings please send them to us so we can print them in future issues of* The Goldfinch.

Tribute to a Diary

by Eugena Song
Abbie Sawyer Elementary School
Ames, Iowa

Why do kids keep diaries today? Eugena Song of Ames, Iowa, tells us why keeping a diary is important.

Diaries are companions of the heart. The sup pressed angers, joys, and sadness can all be expressed as you write. You can write things you would never dare to say and no one will tell you they think it's stupid. All those simple details of your life, all those golden facts and diamond pleasures, all the precious things that get lost with time can be written and kept forever. Even the wishes that you make can become real. . .

I remember back to a time when I wrote about the puppy that I so longed for. As I wrote, I could almost feel the soft fur, look into the bright eyes, and hear the trusting, soft, whimper. It was just opening my diary and writing that made that experience so vividly mine. Some people might have said, "Duh. You're making that up. Nobody can do that." But I know. A diary is truly a friend. It's almost like a second heart made expressly for your feelings.

Some people think that the most enjoyable and fun things to do are expensive and complicated. That is not always true. A diary can belong to anyone. Only the person who knows how to confide and truly care can belong to a diary. If a diary could talk, I think its favorite expression would be, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." ■

Answers

Page 23 (1) A local park? A playgroound? Probably not a golf course since they were not common in Iowa in the 19th century. (2) Prehaps Sarah realized she was making an unfair judgment about people she saw or perhaps her mother corrected her. (3) We guess that prairie chicken eggs are larger than marbles but smaller than softballs. (4)"Sponky" might be a misspelling of the word "spunky" which can mean "to show spirit, or be plucky." But it might also mean "depressed." Try playing this game with other diaries in this issue. Write us about your mysteries and/or your solutions.

Page 22 (1) c; (2) a; (3) b; (4) b; (5) a.

Page 28 (1) quill pen; (2) ink bottle; (3) ink blotter; (4) wood sand shaker; (5) fountain pen

Page 26 Possible clues about the way buildings were built in 1876 Iowa might include: farm houses made up of one or two rooms; made out of wood; like cabins; barns similar to haystacks, but with a door; buildings have lightning conductors; larger public buildings made of brick. Answers may vary.

Editor's P.S.

As editor of The Goldfinch, *I thought I'd share some parts of my own 1974 diary when I was 15 years old and living in Des Moines*

Jan 23
The Vietnam War is stopped (cease fire on Sat.) I have writers' cramp. Because I finished my first 3,000 word story. Tomorrow I'm taking it to school for opinions. Nancy [my sister] says its too depressing. I wrote all day. No school. I have Math—Science—Band—Art—Independent Study and Humanities.

March 31
Today was O.K., but very boring. Mom and Dad were at work all day. It was rainy & icky, we couldn't go out. I did a lot on story. . . . Listened to cassettes all day. Nothing on TV.

April 7
Went to the mall with mom. Didn't find anything. Dawn & I went to movie "Sound of Music." It was good. I cried during some of it. Had pizza then went to babysit at Clarke's. I babysat from 6:30 to 12 & got $4.00. I luv baby-sitting!

July 2
Went to orthodontist at 11. My mouth is killing me. Went to the mall afterwards. I got a cardigan. It's white. I love it!

July 3
Woke up at 9:30. I had about 6 hours of sleep. My braces were killing me. I slept horrible!

July 28
Woke up at 9:30. Put on blue halter & purple shorts. Had hair curled. Mom worked. Dad played tennis all morning. Talked to Dawn. We rode our bikes to the mall.

December 31
Good ole' diary. I've gotten used to you, you're a habit. I'll put you away. Thank you diary—you have all my wonderful memories of 1974 within your pages.

The Roost

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE
HEY THERE, GOLDIE! WHAT ARE YOU WRITING IN THAT BOOK?
THIS IS NOT A BOOK!! IT'S MY DIARY!
AAAHHHH!!
I'M WRITING ABOUT MY DAILY ADVENTURES...
ZING!
MY ROMANCES...
MY FRIENDSHIPS...
STOPPP!! YOU'RE CUTTING DOWN MY HOUSE!
AND EVEN THE BAD THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO ME.
SO, WHEN DO I GET TO READ YOUR DIARY?
SORRY, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE THE MOVIE.
JERRY BROWN

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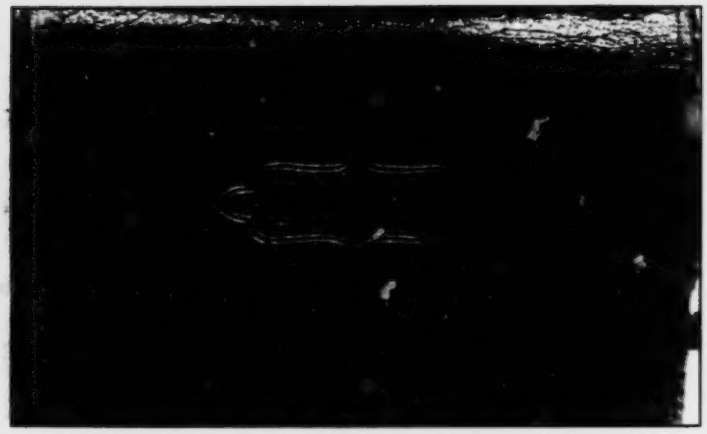

State Historical Society of Iowa

From a new cover for The Goldfinch *to an old diary cover—this issue about diaries has a new look! Do you like it? Write and let us know at the address below!*

The Goldfinch

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